

This Computes!

**Department of Health Services
Children's Medical Services Network
(CMS Net) - Information Bulletin #106**



BIC Re-Issuance Frequently Asked Questions

The re-issuance of Benefits Identification Cards (BICs) commenced on Jan. 26, 2005. Since then, over 2 million BICs have been re-issued. The re-issuance will continue until all eligible recipients have been issued a BIC with the new 14 character BIC-ID. The expected completion date for the re-issuance effort is late June, 2005.

The California Department of Health Services (DHS) IT help desk has been receiving calls from some counties reporting problems associated with the re-issuance of the BICs. Below is a list of these issues and any additional information or potential resolutions associated with these issues. If CMS county staff need additional help or wish to report a problem, they can contact the DHS IT help desk. Problems with providers unable or unwilling to accept either the new or old BIC should be reported to the EDS Provider help desk at 800-541-5555.

1. MEDS indicates a new BIC has been issued, but the recipient has not yet received their new card.

To the knowledge of DHS, the BICs are being mailed out in a timely manner. Recipients should expect to receive their new BIC about 3 to 7 days after issuance. When a recipient calls the county about not receiving their new BIC, the county should confirm that the recipient's correct address has been reported to MEDS. When issuing BICs, MEDS uses 1) the recipient's mailing address (if present) or 2) the recipient's residence address. County workers should view the MEDS Address Information screen (inquiry option QA) to confirm the address. In some reported cases, the recipient's residence address on the QM screen was correct, while the mailing address on the QA screen was incorrect. Counties can use the MEDS EW12 transaction to correct the address information.

2. When calling for help, county workers are being told that it may take 3 to 6 weeks for the new BICs to arrive.

Counties typically call the DHS IT help desk or the EDS Beneficiary help desk for assistance. DHS has been unable to confirm that either help desk is giving out this erroneous information. Once a BIC has been issued, the delivery time is typically 3 to 7 days.

3. Some recipients are concerned when one member of their case receives a new BIC, but the other case members don't also receive a new BIC. Recipients are concerned that this indicates the other case members are no longer eligible.

BICs are not being re-issued according to case composition or to any specific geographic area. In order to randomize the BIC issue dates, the BICs are being re-issued in MEDS-ID order. The re-issuance started with the lowest numbered SSNs and will end with the high pseudo MEDS-IDs. Because of this, it will be common for members of the same case to receive their new BICs many weeks or months apart.

4. Some providers are not accepting BICs with the old 10 character BIC-ID.

Counties have reported that some pharmacies will not accept the old BICs. DHS started issuing provider bulletins in the fall of 2004 explaining how the BICs will be re-issued over a six month period and, during that time, providers will be seeing a mixture of old and new BIC-IDs. Apparently some pharmacies have third party software which has been modified to only accept the new BIC-ID. DHS and EDS are working with the pharmacies to assist them in correcting their software problems. Pharmacies still having internal software problems can use the DHS eligibility verification system (POS system, phone-AEVS, Medi-Cal website) to verify recipient eligibility. The DHS system will accept the new BIC-ID, the old BIC-ID or the SSN.

5. Recipients report that their old BIC no longer works, but they have not yet received their new BIC.

There was an ongoing problem in MEDS that didn't fully come to light until the re-issuance started. When a new BIC is issued, the old BIC date is stored in the paper card date on MEDS. This allows the old BIC to continue being used until the new BIC arrives, since either card date will work with a POS eligibility inquiry. At MEDS Renewal, the paper card date is removed if it is more than 30 days old. Since most old BICs were issued several months or years in the past, it was quite likely that the old BIC date was more than 30 days old. Consequently, the old BIC dates were removed when MEDS Renewal ran on the night of Feb. 22, 2005.

This presents a problem for recipients whose BIC was issued within one week of Renewal, since the new BIC may not have arrived before the old BIC date is wiped out. To correct this, MEDS is being modified to retain the old BIC date until 1) the date is more than 30 days old AND 2) it's been 30 days since the new BIC was issued. This will effectively retain the old BIC date for 30-60 days, depending on what time of the month the card was issued.

For those recipients who are having this problem, county workers can do a MEDS EW45 transaction to issue the recipient a paper card to use until their new BIC arrives.

6. Immediate need paper cards don't contain the new 14 character id.

DHS is still working on the MEDS system modifications to print the 14 character id on the paper cards. The big change will be the real-time assignment of CINs to recipients that are brand new to MEDS. Currently, new recipients have their CINs assigned in the nightly MEDS batch process. Unless the worker enters the CIN on the immediate need screen, the only recipient-ID available to print on the paper card for new recipients is the SSN or newly assigned pseudo MEDS-ID. This is not a confidentiality problem since the cards are given directly to the recipients and not mailed. A new interface between MEDS and the Statewide Client Index (SCI) will be built to obtain a CIN real-time during the immediate need process so that the new 14 character BIC-ID can print on all the paper cards.

Additional information can be found on the Medi-Cal web site <http://www.medi-cal.ca.gov/> under the **New Medi-Cal BIC ID Numbers** article on the first page